

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11  
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R 121117Z APR 78  
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0855

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 5685

THE FOLLOWING TELEGRAM WAS SENT ACTION NEW DELHI INFO BOMBAY,  
DACCA AND MADRAS 11 APRIL 1978 AND IS REPEATED FOR YOUR ACTION/  
INFORMATION.

QUOTE:

C O N F I D E N T I A L CALCUTTA 0611

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: SREF PINT IN  
SUBJECT: DESERTION OF DANDAKARANYA REFUGEES TO WEST BENGAL  
UPDATE II

REF: (A) CALCUTTA 0535, (B) CALCUTTA 0610

1. REFTEL B DISCUSSED WHAT WE NOW KNOW OF THE STATUS  
OF THE REFUGEES, THE REACTIONS OF THE GOWB AND CENTER,  
AND THE PROSPECTS. THIS MESSAGE CONCERNS THE MYSTERY OF  
WHY THIS INFLUX AT THIS TIME.

2. AS PREVIOUSLY MENTIONED, THE MALKANGIRI ZONE IN  
ORISSA HAS BEEN THE POOREST OF THE THREE ZONES OF THE  
DANDAKARANYA PROJECT. TWICE BEFORE REFUGEES HAVE LEFT  
IN SOME NUMBERS FOR WEST BENGAL, ONLY TO RETURN IN DEFEAT  
TO DANDAKARANYA. THE FIRST WAS IN 1971 WHEN THE  
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BANGLADESH WAR BROUGHT A FLICKER OF HOPE OF RETURN TO THE  
FORMER EAST BENGAL, AND AGAIN IN ABOUT 1974. IN THE  
PAST FEW YEARS, WORK HAS BEGUN ON AN IRRIGATION  
PROJECT FOR THE POTTERU RIVER, WHICH RUNS THROUGH  
THE MALKANGIRI ZONE. ABOUT 40 CRORES HAVE BEEN  
SPENT ON IT, AND IT IS EXPECTED TO BE READY IN  
ABOUT 1981, PROVIDING SOME 150,000 NEWLY IRRIGATED

ACRES.

3. ONE SCHOOL OF THOUGHT IS THAT SOME FORM OF ORGANIZED GROUP, PRESUMABLY OF NON-ADIVASI ORISSANS, BUT POSSIBLY INCLUDING PEOPLE FROM ANDHRA PRADESH (MOST OF THE LABOR ON THE POTTERU PROJECT IS ANDHRAN), COVET THIS IRRIGATED LAND AND HAVE SCHEMED TO DRIVE THE BENGALI REFUGEES OUT. THOSE WHO HOLD TO THIS VIEW CITE THE HIGH DEGREE OF ORGANIZATION IN THE PRESENT MOVEMENT. TRUCKS HAVE BEEN HIRED (AT PERHAPS RS 8,000 A TRIP), RAILWAY TICKETS PAID, PAMPHLETS HAVE BEEN ISSUED PORTRAYING THE JOYS OF A FUTURE LIFE IN THE DUNERBANS, ARRANGEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE FOR A QUICK MARKET FOR THE MEAGER BELONGINGS OF THE REFUGEES PRIOR TO DEPARTURE. THERE IS ALSO THE STORY OF A RECENT POLICE RAID IN CALCUTTA ON PROPERTY BELONGING TO ONE OF THE ULTRA ANTI-BANGLADESH RADICAL, COMMUNAL GROUPS, AT WHICH PAMPHLETS WERE TURNED UP EXHORTING THE DANDAKARANYA REFUGEES TO HEAD FOR BENGAL. THE LINE WAS THAT THIS WAS THEIR LAST CHANCE TO BE GIVEN FARMLAND IN THE BENGALI-SPEAKING PROMISED LAND.

4. ANOTHER CYNICAL SUGGESTION, BASED ON THE PAST HISTORY OF SIMILAR REFUGEE MOVEMENTS, WAS THAT SOMEONE FIGURED THE WHOLE AFFAIR WOULD RESULT IN FURTHER PAYOFF BY CENTER OR STATE, OR BOTH TO THE REFUGEES OF NEW RESETTLEMENT FUNDS, WHICH  
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COULD BE SIPHONED OFF INTO THE POCKETS OF THOSE EXPECT IN SUCH GRAFT. MEANWHILE, THOSE WHO HAVE ARRIVED IN THE HASNABAD AREA, WHERE THERE HAVE BEEN SOME 40 DEATHS FROM DISEASE AND MALNUTRITION, AND ONE WELL-PUBLICIZED SUICIDE BY HANGING, HAVE REPORTEDLY WRITTEN BACK TO THOSE REMAINING IN MALKANGIRI, ENCOURAGING THEM TO COME WITH TALES OF HOUSING, CASH SUBSIDIES, PROMISED SETTLEMENT IN THE SUNDERHANS, AND VARIOUS WILD RUMORS.

5. IN SHORT, THERE IS A SORT OF SELF-REINFORCING MASS HYSTERIA, WHICH ONE JOURNALIST COMPARES TO THE ARTIFICIAL BUOYANCY OF A STOCK MARKET BOOM, AND FINALLY, BASED ON THE HISTORY OF THE TREATMENT OF BENGALI REFUGEES SINCE 1947 AND OF THE BROKEN PROMISES OF FINANCIAL HELP FROM THE CENTER (CONTRASTED POINTEDLY HERE WITH MUCH GREATER SUMS PROPORTIONATELY SPENT ON REFUGEES IN PUNJAB AND THE NORTHEAST STATES), THERE IS A CERTAIN ALMOST HOPELESS DISGUST OF MANY OBSERVERS OVER THE WILLINGNESS OF SO MANY ELEMENTS TO TREAT THESE POOR PEOPLE AS HUMAN PAWNS IN THE FURTHERANCE OF VARIOUS SPECIAL INTERESTS. THERE WAS A TIME WHEN THE CPM, IN OPPOSITION UNITED

BENGALI REFUGEES POLITICALLY AS A STRONG ELEMENT OF  
PARTY SUPPORT. IT CANNOT, AND IS NOT LIKELY TO,  
TURN ITS BACK ON THEM NOW. NOR CAN IT ALLOW OTHERS  
TO USE THE REFUGEES IN TACTICS AGAINST THE STATE GOVERN-  
MENT, IN THE WAY IT ONCE PRACTICED THEM AGAINST EARLIER  
ONES. THE PROBLEM IS NOT SUSCEPTIBLE OF AN EARLY AND  
FACILE SOLUTION. ONE CAN ONLY HOPE THAT THE INFLUX HAS  
CRESED AND THAT THE REFUGEES WILL BE DEALT WITH  
SYMPATHETICALLY AND HUMANELY.  
PERKINS UNQUOTE  
GOHEEN

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## Message Attributes

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**To:** STATE  
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